



DVD Review

Tony Palmer's All You Need Is Love - The Story Of Popular Music

MVD Visual, 2008

Review by Joe Milliken

Music fans everywhere - not rock and roll fans, not jazz fans, not blues, metal or pop fans, but simply *music* fans - pick up a copy of Tony Palmer's award-winning *All You Need Is Love* because simply put, it is a classic and must-have for any music DVD collection. Distributed by MVD Visual, this deluxe, 5-DVD box set somehow tries to capture and capsule the seemingly infinite influence the music industry has had on our culture through pop art, film, television and the world wide web.

During the early 1970's and under the suggestion of friend John Lennon, the celebrated film director and journalist attempted to document a "history of popular music" through the interviews and live footage of so many musical movers and shakers - present and past - that it was quite an accomplishment at the time. In fact, it would become the benchmark for such music films to compare.

The original world broadcast of *All You Need Is Love* happened between 1976 and 1981, however the documentary series was never broadcast again or ever officially released on video or DVD, making this 17 episode, 5-disc set a first since the original broadcast. A fact that seems a shame considering this documentary is considered the "definitive music documentary."

The footage covers just about every music genre imaginable. From rock and roll and blues, to jazz, swing and ragtime, to rock folk and country and everything in between. The many interviews also run the gamut of genres including such legends as Elvis Presley, Bing Crosby, Jimi Hendrix, John Lennon, Dizzy Gillespie, Muddy Waters, Benny Goodman, Eric Clapton and Fran Zappa. Just to name but a few.

Before looking at the liner notes of each disc, it is hard to imagine being able to document and cover such a wide scope of music, however Palmer seemingly does just that. Moving from gospel, ragtime and vaudeville, to swing jazz and rhythm and blues, to country, rock and roll, the Beatles and glitter rock, to everything in between.

The eight-page booklet of liner notes seems a little disappointing, which lacks any commentary or a significant amount of photos outside of a short timeline layout, but considering the amount of material that is covered here, one has to let that minor flaw go.

Overall this is a wonderful and informative package, that holds up well some 30 years after its' original broadcast. In fact this documentary could easily be utilized to this day, as a teaching tool within a college curriculum. A true measuring stick by anyone's standards.

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